

# Crosswalks and Flashing Crosswalks Frequently Asked Questions

## **Where should a motorist stop to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians in a crosswalk?**

Motorists are expected to stop at or before the yield line where there is a sign stating "Yield Here to Pedestrians." If these signs and markings are not present, then the motorist should stop to yield prior to the crosswalk markings.

## **What rules are important for pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers to know about crossing in a crosswalk?**

- State law requires that pedestrians give vehicles the opportunity to stop before entering a crosswalk.
- Drivers shall yield the right of way to pedestrians on a sidewalk or approaching or within a crosswalk.
- In February 2012, the City of Boulder adopted three new crosswalk related ordinances that affect pedestrian bicyclist and driver responsibilities at crosswalks:
  - Pedestrians and bicyclists are required to activate the flashing lights at crosswalks, where available, before entering the road.
  - Bicyclists must slow to 8 miles per hour as they approach, enter and traverse a crosswalk at all intersections.
  - Drivers approaching a crosswalk must not pass another vehicle already stopped for a crossing pedestrian.

## **Are these rules different for cyclists?**

Cyclists in crosswalks are considered pedestrians and have the same rights and responsibilities. As long as they enter and traverse the crosswalk at a reasonable speed so that other drivers may anticipate the necessity to yield when required.

## **How can I find out more on the local codes and Colorado Statutes?**

See the City of Boulder [Use of Crosswalk](#) and [Yield to Pedestrian Required](#) codes, and the Colorado Statute regarding [Operation of bicycles and other human-powered vehicles](#).

## **Why does the City of Boulder use flashing crosswalk signs?**

Flashing crosswalk signs are used primarily on multi-lane roadways where one car may shield the view of a pedestrian from another car approaching in the neighboring lane. The flashing yellow lights advise drivers to slow down and prepare to stop for possible crosswalk users even if they can't see ahead of the cars in the neighboring lane.

Vehicles are always required to yield to pedestrians in a crosswalk whether there are flashing signs or not. The flashing signs are intended to provide additional warning to drivers that a pedestrian is present. Studies have shown that these enhancements substantially increase the compliance of vehicles yielding to pedestrians and enable pedestrians to cross more quickly.

## **Do I have to stop for the flashing yellow lights even if there is clearly no one in the crosswalk?(For example, the pedestrian has already crossed and the lights are still flashing.)**

State law requires that you yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk. It does not require that you stop for a flashing yellow sign. According to local ordinance, you are required to stop in advance of a crosswalk if a vehicle is stopped in the adjacent lane, even if there are no pedestrians visibly present. The flashing yellow lights are just another way to catch motorists' attention to the possibility of a pedestrian.

**Why are the flashing lights yellow and not red?**

A flashing yellow light means "warning." A flashing red light means "stop your vehicle." If the city were to use red lights in this situation, it would require that there also be yellow warning lights prior to the red. Essentially, the device would become a traffic signal.

**Is Boulder the only place that uses the flashing yellow crosswalk signs?**

Flashing yellow lights have been used with pedestrian crossing signs in communities across the country. Communities using the same approach as Boulder include Estes Park and Louisville. Other communities, like Lafayette and Broomfield, use flashing yellow lights on top of their pedestrian signs.